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FARM LABOR FACT SHEET FOR 1945

War Food Administration
U. S. Department of Agriculture

The farm labor shortage will continue to be serious in 1945, and this year's program will again call for the recruitment of four million people to supplement the regular farm work force on a full- or part-time basis. With the exception of the weather, farm labor is the greatest limiting factor in farm production. And developments during the last months of 1944 and early in the new year have made it evident that 1945 will perhaps be the most difficult year yet encountered on the farm labor front.

To begin with, the new farm goals call for a continued high rate of food and fiber production in 1945. At the same time, indications point to the smallest labor force on the farms in many years, especially in view of the increased needs of the armed forces.

There is not expected to be a substantial movement of people back to the farms this year. Even an early termination of the war in Europe would not return a large number of men from the armed services to the farms in time for work on the 1945 crop, due to the many problems involved in demobilization. Nor is any industrial reconversion that might follow the European war expected to solve the farm labor shortage. History has shown that people who go to the towns and cities in time of great industrial activity generally do not go back to the farms as long as good paying jobs in business and industry are available.

What the Crop Corps Is

The U. S. Crop Corps is not an organization but a designation for all emergency farm workers, including (1) the youth, 14-17, known as Victory Farm Volunteers; and (2) the women, 18 and over, called the Women's Land Army.

With brief instruction even those Crop Corps workers without previous farm experience can learn to harvest many kinds of fruits and vegetables, pick cotton, stack peanuts, and do many other farm jobs. Crop Corps recruitment is on a volunteer basis, but those who enlist do not give their time but are paid prevailing wages.

The 12,000 local farm labor offices in all parts of the country placed three million different individual workers in some 5½ million farm jobs during 1944. Besides rural people and others with farm backgrounds, these workers included teen-age school youth, college girls, school teachers, clerks, stenographers, housewives and businessmen.

Sources of Farm Labor

The bulk of the farm work is done by farmers and their families, along with year-round hired workers. The farm help to supplement their efforts, especially with harvest work, comes from these sources:

1. Local help -- About 90 percent of the supplemental farm labor comes from within the state or county of need.
2. Prisoners of War -- They may be used on an even larger scale in 1945 than in 1944. Farmers pay prevailing wages for war prisoner labor, the same as for all other farm labor. Amounts in excess of the Army allowances to the prisoners are paid into the U. S. Treasury.
3. Foreign workers -- During the war natives of Mexico, British West Indies, Newfoundland, and Canada have been brought into this country by the War Food Administration for seasonal farm work. They usually make good farm hands, but their numbers are necessarily limited.

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4. Inter-state workers -- These include both rural and city people.
5. Miscellaneous -- Other groups, also limited in number, include soldiers and sailors on furlough, conscientious objectors, and inmates of penal institutions.

Appeals

PATRIOTISM is by far the leading reason why nonfarm people volunteer for emergency farm work. They should be made to realize that food is important in the prosecution of the war and that the production and harvesting of crops is an essential war job.

HEALTH may be an important factor in interesting some people in farm work. Those who work in offices and factories throughout the year often find it pleasant and satisfying to spend their vacations out in the open.

MONETARY RETURNS probably rank last among the incentives which get nonfarm people out on the farm. In most cases farm wages cannot compete with the industrial wage scale. However, the pay angle frequently is an important factor in the employment of youth, and for all-summer employment of teachers and college girls.

How to Enlist for Farm Work

Those who have the entire summer to spare should contact their county agent or local farm employment office. In those cities where no county agricultural agent is located, there will probably be some kind of local farm labor office where prospective workers can obtain information.

Those who have less than the entire season to devote to farm work (such as week-ends or two-week vacations) should stand by for the local call in their community. This call will come through newspapers, radio, and other means of communication.

Information

Best information is, of course, local--county agent or State Extension Service. However, the following may be obtained from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.:

1. Six posters, as follows:
 - (a) "Help Harvest War Crops" (general recruitment)
 - (b) "Help Harvest" (general recruitment - limited supply)
 - (c) "Pitch In and Help" (bright color--appeal to women)
 - (d) "Join Women's Land Army" (girl in WLA uniform)
 - (e) "Join Us on the Farm Front" (appeal to youth)
2. "The Women's Land Army of the U. S. Crop Corps" (AWI-102)
3. "VFW on the Farm Front" (MP-542)
4. "Mobilizing Help to Save Crops" (AWI-106)--four-page leaflet.
5. "Join Us on the Farm Front" (AWI-91)--one-fold leaflet for nonfarm youth.
6. "Pitch In and Help" (AWI-101)--one-fold leaflet for nonfarm women.
7. "Victory Harvest" -- a two-reel sound, black and white motion picture, for local recruitment. (Scheduled for release February 15).

